

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 00818 171536Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 USIA-15 AID-05 EB-08 NSC-05
TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 L-03 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-01 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06
LAB-04 SIL-01 PA-02 ACDA-12 /115 W
-----027496 180704Z /10

R 171419Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2491
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS HELSINKI 0818

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, AFSP, FI
SUBJECT: SAK CALLS FOR GENERAL WORK STOPPAGE TO EMPHASIZE COM-
PENSATION DEMANDS

REF: (A) HELSINKI 0755 (NOTAL), (B) HELSINKI 0741 (NOTAL)

1. A POTENTIALLY SERIOUS CONFRONTATION BEGAN DEVELOPING
THIS WEEK BETWEEN WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS ORGANIZATIONS
OVER THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION TO LABOR FOR THE EF-
FECTS OF THE FEBRUARY DEVALUATION. ON MARCH 14 THE EM-
PLOYERS FEDERATION (STK) CATEGORICALLY REJECTED THE
CENTRAL LABOR FEDERATION (SAK) DEMAND FOR A 30-PENNY
WAGE INCREASE (REF A). THE SAK RESPONDED THE NEXT DAY
BY ANNOUNCING A TWO-DAY "WARNING" STRIKE WOULD BE
HELD MARCH 31-APRIL 1 IF NO AGREEMENT IS REACHED WITH
THE STK.

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2. THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECTED STRIKE IS NOT
YET EVIDENT, AS EACH SAK UNION WOULD CHOOSE THE
NATURE OF ITS ACTION, BUT THE SAK ANTICIPATES THAT THE
WORK STOPPAGE WOULD AFFECT ALL SECTORS OF THE
ECONOMY EXCEPT FOR VITAL SERVICES. THE WHITE COLLAR
FEDERATION (TVK) DECIDED MARCH 16 NOT TO PARTICIPATE

IN THE STRIKE, AS DID THE FEDERATION OF TECHNICAL EMPLOYEE UNIONS (STTK), WHOSE MEMBERS SUCCEEDED IN TYING UP MUCH OF THE ECONOMY A YEAR AGO. THE MILLION-MEMBER SAK BY ITSELF, HOWEVER, COULD SHUT DOWN THE COUNTRY TO A DEGREE NOT EXPERIENCED SINCE THE GENERAL STRIKE OF 1956; WITH BOTH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND COMMUNISTS BEHIND THE ANNOUNCED STOPPAGE A HIGH STRIKE-PARTICIPATION RATE IS PROBABLE. SAK'S COMMUNIST VICE-CHAIRMAN OLAVI HANINEN HAS DESCRIBED THE PROJECTED ACTION AS A "GENERAL STRIKE LIMITED ONLY IN TIME," BUT SAK CHAIRMAN OIVIO, A SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, WAS CAREFUL TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE STRIKE WOULD NOT BE A GENERAL STRIKE IN THE CLASSICAL SENSE BUT A WARNING ACTION TO EMPLOYERS.

3. THE IMPASSE OVER DEVALUATION COMPENSATION IS ADDING TO STRAINS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS CURRENTLY SEEKING A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM, ITS FIRST SERIOUS TEST (REF B). BOTH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP) AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY HAVE EXPRESSED FULL SUPPORT FOR THE STRIKE. THE CENTER PARTY IS OPPOSED TO COMPENSATION TO LABOR FOR THE DEVALUATION AND IS ACCUSING THE SDP OF USING THE LABOR MARKET CRISIS AS AN EXCUSE FOR INACTION ON DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC PROGRAM. THIS CONFRONTATION, WHICH WOULD BE EXACERBATED IN THE UNCLASSIFIED

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EVENT OF A BROAD WORK STOPPAGE, THREATENS TO FRUSTRATE GOVERNMENT COOPERATION IN OTHER AREAS.
RIDGWAY

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Disposition Reason:
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